

Message Text

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SUBJECT: RECENT ISRAELI ACTIONS ON THE WEST BANK.

1. SUMMARY: WE ARE CONCERNED THAT A NUMBER OF ISRAELI
ACTIONS ON THE WEST BANK IN RECENT WEEKS MAY INADVERTENTLY
BE PERCEIVED AS CASTING DOUBT ON THE SINCERITY OF ISRAEL'S
PROFESSED INTENTIONS TO FOSTER INTERNAL AUTONOMY, THE KEY
TO ISRAEL'S NEGOTIATING POSTURE. WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPOR-
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TANT TO BRING THIS CONCERN TO ISRAEL'S ATTENTION AND TO
URGE THAT THEY MINIMIZE ACTIONS THAT COULD AROUSE DOUBTS
ABOUT THEIR SINCERITY AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO EXPLORE
EVERY AVENUE TO PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN A NUMBER OF STEPS IN RECENT
DAYS ON THE WEST BANK THAT COLLECTIVELY APPEAR--PERHAPS
MISLEADINGLY--TO PRESAGE A SIGNIFICANT STEP-UP IN THE PACE
AND SCALE OF SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AND EVEN FURTHER RESTRIC-
TION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
INSTITUTIONS.

3. ALTHOUGH YOU ARE AWARE OF THESE MEASURES, IT IS USEFUL TO RECAPITULATE THEM HERE:

-- STEADY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF SEVERAL OF THE

GUSH EMUNIM SETTLEMENTS SET UP IN "MILITARY CAMPS" IN THE NORTHERN WEST BANK SINCE SEPTEMBER 1977 AND A GRADUAL EVAPORATION OF THEIR NOMINAL MILITARY COVER, WHILE EXPANSION OF JORDAN VALLEY SETTLEMENTS CONTINUES APPARENTLY UNABATED.

-- PRESENTATION TO THE MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENTS COMMITTEE BY A WEIZMAN AIDE OF A GRANDIOSE PLAN TO ESTABLISH SIX ISRAELI CITIES ON THE WEST BANK WITH AN EVENTUAL POPULATION OF ABOUT 150,000. ALTHOUGH WEIZMAN PRIVATELY DISMISSED THIS PLAN AS "NOT SERIOUS," THERE REMAINS THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF AN OFFICIAL INTENTION TO INCREASE MASSIVELY THE JEWISH POPULATION OF THE WEST BANK.

-- THE SHORT-LIVED ADOPTION OF A POLICY--NOW APPARENTLY REVERSED--OF FREEZING ALL PRIVATE TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING WEST BANK LAND OWNED BY NON-RESIDENT PALESTINIANS, IN WHAT SECRET

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MANY FEARED WAS A PRECURSOR TO WIDESPREAD EXPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR NEW SETTLEMENTS.

-- DISAPPROVAL--IN MANY CASES ARBITRARILY--OF MANY OF THE SMALL-SCALE WEST BANK/GAZA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PROPOSED BY ANERA, WITH THE APPARENT INTENT OF DISCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS THAT WOULD REDUCE ARAB DEPENDENCE ON THE ISRAELI ECONOMY.

-- REFUSAL OF THE MILITARY GOVERNOR TO RENEW THE WORK PERMITS OF SEVEN EXPATRIATES--INCLUDING FIVE AMERICANS--TEACHING AT BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF THEIR ACTIVE IDENTIFICATION WITH PALESTINIAN POLITICAL VIEWS.

-- A TIGHTENING OF RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY BEYOND MUNICIPAL BORDERS, WITH THE APPARENT INTENT TO STIFLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST BANK-WIDE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OR LEADERSHIP.

4. INSTEAD OF THE PIECEMEAL APPROACH WE HAVE SO OFTEN TAKEN IN THE PAST, WE BELIEVE THE TIME HAS COME TO HAVE A LONG TALK WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE EFFECT OF THESE ACTIONS AND THEIR ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE NEED TO POINT OUT TO THEM WHAT WE SEE AS THE DANGERS INHERENT IN THE ABOVE-OUTLINED ACTIONS, IN TERMS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF "CREEPING ANNEXATIONISM" THAT THEY FOSTER IN THE U.S. AS WELL AS AMONG THE ARABS AND

THEIR PERNICIOUS EFFECT ON OUR EFFORTS TO INDUCE ARAB MOD-
ERATION AND WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE.

5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT RIGHT NOW, WHILE WE ARE AWAITING
HOPEFULLY POSITIVE RESPONSES TO OUR QUESTIONS REGARDING THE
FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK, IS NOT THE IDEAL TIME TO BE RAIS-
ING UNPLEASANT AND POSSIBLY FRACTIOUS QUESTIONS OF THIS
NATURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE CAN ALL AGREE THERE NEVER IS
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AN IDEAL TIME TO TAKE UP OUR POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH THE
ISRAELIS. DANGER IS THAT THE LONGER THESE ISSUES GO UNAD-
DRESSED, THE MORE DAMAGING MIGHT BE THEIR CUMULATIVE EFFECT
AND THE LESS EFFECTIVE MIGHT BE OUR PRESENTATION. SINCE WE
DO NOT KNOW, IN ANY CASE, WHEN THE CABINET WILL PRODUCE A
DEFINITE RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTIONS, WE BELIEVE YOU SHOULD
APPROACH WEIZMAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND ADDRESS OUR CON-
CERNS ACCORDING TO THE TALKING POINTS IN THE FOLLOWING
PARAGRAPH. AS THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES YOU SHOULD, AT YOUR
DISCRETION, MAKE THE SAME POINTS WITH DAYAN. IN BOTH CASES,
YOU SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT YOUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IN RAIS-
ING THESE QUESTIONS IS TO OBTAIN A CLARIFICATION OF ISRAELI
INTENTIONS ON THE WEST BANK, RATHER THAN TO RENDER A JUDG-
MENT. YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT WHILE EACH OF THE INSTANCES
ENUMERATED MAY HAVE AN INNOCENT EXPLANATION, THEIR COLLEC-
TIVE IMPACT IS TO RAISE TROUBLING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SERI-
OUSNESS OF ISRAEL'S PROFESSED INTENTIONS TO FOSTER GENUINE
AUTONOMY IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

6. TALKING POINTS.

-- WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A SERIES OF REPORTS OF ACTIONS
THAT ISRAEL HAS PURPORTEDLY TAKEN OR CONTEMPLATED RECENTLY
ON THE WEST BANK. OUR CONCERN IS THAT SUCH ACTIONS, OR EVEN
THE FACT THEY ARE BEING CONSIDERED, WILL PREJUDICE OUR MU-
TUAL EFFORTS TO FIND A FORMULA FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA
QUESTIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT RENEWAL OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI
NEGOTIATIONS. MUCH DEPENDS, IN THE ABSENCE OF BEING ABLE
TO NEGOTIATE A DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT NOW, ON SADAT'S BEING
CONVINCED--AND HIS ABILITY TO CONVINCE OTHERS--THAT ISRAEL
IS NOT TAKING STEPS ON THE GROUND THAT WILL PREJUDGE A
FINAL SETTLEMENT IN THE FUTURE.

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-- THE MOST OBVIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN IS ISRAEL'S CONTINU-
ING EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST
BANK. OUR DISAPPROVAL OF THESE ACTIVITIES ON BOTH LEGAL
AND POLITICAL GROUNDS HAS BEEN STATED SO OFTEN THAT IT
HARDLY REQUIRES REITERATION. THE MAIN POINT WE WANT TO

MAKE NOW IS THAT A CONTINUATION OF SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IS IN OUR VIEW INCONSISTENT WITH ISRAEL'S DESIRE TO EXPLORE ALL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT AND ITS STATEMENTS THAT EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE. ALTHOUGH IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO US THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS UNWILLING TO TERMINATE OR EVEN SUSPEND SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY ON THE WEST BANK, WE WERE TOLD LAST SEPTEMBER THAT ISRAEL WOULD IMPOSE CERTAIN LIMITATIONS ON THAT ACTIVITY, BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE. WE WERE TOLD THAT ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS WERE THEN ENVISAGED (ALTHOUGH THERE IS CONFUSION OVER THE LENGTH OF THE PERIOD REFERRED TO, I.E., "BY THE END OF THIS YEAR" OR "OVER THE NEXT YEAR") AND THAT THESE SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE RESTRICTED TO EXISTING MILITARY CAMPS SO AS TO CONFORM MORE CLOSELY WITH THE STRICTURES OF THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION.

-- SINCE SEPTEMBER, AT LEAST 13 NEW SETTLEMENTS HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED OR ESTABLISHED IN THE WEST BANK, ONLY FOUR OF WHICH APPEAR TO MEET THE STRICT DEFINITION OF "EXISTING MILITARY CAMPS." (ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, THREE SITES WERE ABANDONED JORDANIAN INSTALLATIONS OCCASIONALLY USED AS TRAINING AREAS, AND AT LEAST FOUR HAD NO MILITARY PRESENCE AT ALL AS OF THE TIME THE ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN.) IN SEVERAL INSTANCES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITARY CAMPS PRECEDED THAT OF THE SETTLEMENTS BY ONLY A FEW DAYS. NOW IT APPEARS--AT KARNEI SHOMRON AND TAPUAH, FOR EXAMPLE--THAT THE MILITARY FACADE IS BEING DROPPED ALTOGETHER, DEFENSE MINISTRY PROTESTATIONS TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, AND THAT GUSH EMUNIM IS SLOWLY FORCTNG THE GOVERNMENT TO LEGITIMIZE ITS SO-CALLED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AT SHILO AS A SETTLEMENT.

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-- ANOTHER CAUSE FOR CONCERN IS THE PRESENTATION TO THE MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENTS COMMITTEE OF A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR SIX URBAN SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK WITH A TOTAL PROJECTED POPULATION OF 38,000 FAMILIES.WHILE IT WAS SOMEWHAT REASSURING TO HEAR FROM WEIZMAN THAT THIS PLAN IS FAR FROM IMPLEMENTATION AND THAT IT WAS INSPIRED LARGELY BY INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, THESE EXPLANATIONS WILL NOT BE CONVINCING TO THE MANY PEOPLE IN NO ONLY THE ARAB WORLD, BUT ALSO IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST, WHO INTERPRET DISCUSSION OF EVERY NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENT PLAN AS FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THEIR PERCEPTION OF ISRAEL AS EXPANSIONIST AND UNWILLING TO CONTEMPLATE THE COMPROMISES ESSENTIAL FOR FRUITFUL PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS BECOMES A SERIOUS

PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSTACLE TO NEGOTIATION. (WITH WEIZMAN YOU MIGHT POINT OUT THAT THE IMPACT OF THE REVELATION OF THIS PLAN IS LIKELY TO BE ESPECIALLY DISTURBING BECAUSE OF ITS PUTATIVE SPONSORSHIP BY WEIZMAN, WHO IS GENERALLY REGARDED BY THE ARABS AS MORE PRAGMATIC ON THE QUESTION OF

SETTLEMENTS THAN MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES.)

-- A CONCOMITANT OF THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS IS THE NEED TO ACQUIRE GROWING AMOUNTS OF ARAB-OWNED LAND. THE RECENT FLAP OVER THE FREEZE ON TRANSFERS OF ABSENTEE-OWNED LAND, JUXTAPOSED--PROBABLY FORTUITOUSLY--WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAN FOR THE SIX URBAN SETTLEMENTS, CAN ONLY ADD TO ARAB FEARS THAT THIS IS A PRECURSOR TO LARGE-SCALE EXPROPRIATION OF LAND FOR ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT THIS TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE ALARM AND THAT THE FREEZE HAS APPARENTLY NOW BEEN LIFTED, BUT ANY REVIVAL OF SUCH A POLICY COULD WEAKEN MODERATE PALESTINIAN FORCES WHO AT SOME POINT MAY BE WILLING TO PLAY A CON-
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STRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

-- ALTHOUGH NOT ON THE SAME SCALE AS THE FOREGOING CONCERNS, WE WISH TO REITERATE OUR DISCONTENT WITH THE GOI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. SPECIFICALLY, THE INSISTENCE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS ON CHANNELLING THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PROPOSED BY ANERA TOWARDS SOCIAL WELFARE RATHER THAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CREATES THE IMPRESSION THAT ISRAEL IS DISCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROMOTING THE CONTINUED DEPENDENCE OF WEST BANK AND GAZA ARABS ON THE ISRAELI ECONOMY, IN OBVIOUS CONTRADICTION OF THE INTENT OF THE BEGIN PLAN. WHILE WE ARE AWARE OF ISRAEL'S DISLIKE OF ANERA'S PERCEIVED PRO-PALESTINIAN BIAS, WE DO HOPE THAT THE GOI WOULD INTERFERE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE WITH ITS ACTIVITIES. AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, AND UNLESS THE GOI CAN PRODUCE EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE NEVER RAISED SECURITY ISSUES.

-- IN THE SAME VEIN, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO RENEW THE WORK PERMITS OF SEVEN FOREIGN INSTRUCTORS AT BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY, INCLUDING FIVE AMERICANS, FOR REASONS THEY BELIEVE ARE RELATED TO THEIR SYMPATHY FOR PALESTINIAN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. IF THIS REPORT IS CORRECT WE BELIEVE THE DECISION IS SHORT-SIGHTED AND FUELS ACCUSATIONS OF INTELLECTUAL REPRESSION.

-- FINALLY, A WORD ABOUT THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF THE WEST BANK. WE BELIEVE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RESPONSIBLE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON THE WEST BANK IS BOTH A PRIME OBJECTIVE OF, AND A SINE QUA NON FOR SUCCESS OF ANY SCHEME FOR INTERNAL SELF-RULE IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. MEASURES WHICH IMPEDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH
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LEADERSHIP WOULD THEREFORE SEEM TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. WHILE WE ARE FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE NEED FOR RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY FOR SECURITY REASONS, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THE WEST BANK MAYORS WHICH PROHIBIT THEM FROM ATTENDING ANY EVENT OF A POLITICAL COLORATION OUTSIDE THEIR HOME TOWNS IS UNNECESSARILY SEVERE AND IS LIKELY TO RAISE QUESTIONS WHETHER ISRAEL IS SERIOUS ABOUT PROMOTING INTERNAL AUTONOMY IN THESE TERRITORIES.

-- TO SUM UP, WE URGE YOU TO WEIGH CAREFULLY THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF THE KINDS OF ACTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF ISRAEL'S LONG-TERM INTENTIONS IN THE WEST BANK. IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID ACTIONS WHICH APPEAR TO CONTRADICT ISRAEL'S OBJECTIVE OF GETTING NEGOTIATIONS STARTED ON WEST BANK ISSUES. WE WOULD LIKE THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY OUR COMMENTS AND TO GIVE US A RESPONSE TO THE POINTS WE HAVE RAISED. VANCE

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